



News From The ...

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Jeff Miller, Chairman, 335 Cannon House Office Building, Washington D.C. 20515

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N.B. Highlight passage in all Memorial Day communications.

H.R. 1407—as amended. Introduced by Rep. Runyan

Summary: The Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2011 directs the Secretary of Veterans Affairs (VA) to increase, as of December 1, 2011, the rates of veterans' disability compensation, additional compensation for dependents, the clothing allowance for certain disabled veterans, and dependency and indemnity compensation for surviving spouses and children. Requires each such increase to be the same percentage as the increase in benefits provided under Title II of the Social Security Act, on the same effective date. Also, extends housing adaptation grant program by five years (2016) for severely disabled service members and veterans temporarily residing with family members.

Talking Points:

- ★ Non-controversial, annual (since 1976) cost-of-living adjustment for veterans.
- ★ Provides relief from the impaired earning capacity of veterans disabled as the result of military service.
- ★ Grants for severely disabled enable veterans help pay for construction costs associated with adaptive housing such as the widening of doorways, wheelchair ramps, and handrails. 24 grants have been awarded since the start of the program (2006).

Cost: Assumed in baseline/Insignificant (less than \$500K over 10 years).

H.R. 1627—as amended. Introduced by Rep. Jeff Miller

Summary: Sets the framework for monuments to be placed in Arlington National Cemetery; enforces the burial reservation policy at Arlington National Cemetery, set in 1962; expresses the House's support for the placement of a monument honoring Jewish War Chaplains on Chaplain's Hill in Arlington National Cemetery; and honors the service, dedication, and sacrifice of all who are presently serving, and those who have served, in support of Operations Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom, and New Dawn.

Talking Points:

- ★ Framework for monuments is similar to that of the rules governing the National Mall and would not require Congressional approval before a monument may be placed (though Congress maintains veto power). This ensures monuments are reviewed in a timely manner.
- ★ Enforcement of the burial reservation process ensures any qualified veteran, regardless of rank, has the opportunity to apply for burial at Arlington National Cemetery. The Cemetery is expected to reach capacity around 2060 and burial should not be subject to favoritism.
- ★ The House supports the placement of a monument honoring Jewish War Chaplains on Chaplain's Hill in Arlington National Cemetery (existing monuments include Catholic Chaplains, Protestant Chaplains, and Chaplains of World War II). The Senate must pass a similar resolution for the monument to satisfy the guidelines stipulated by the U.S. Army.
- ★ More than 5,500 service members have made the ultimate sacrifice since 2001. This Memorial Day, we honor those who have given all, and remember those still serving our nation.

Cost: None.

H.R. 1383—as amended. *Introduced by Rep. Jeff Miller*

Summary: The Restoring GI Bill Fairness Act of 2011, through a manager’s amendment, would temporarily increase the cap on tuition and fees paid under the Post-9/11 GI Bill by the Department of Veterans Affairs from \$17,500 to \$27,000 for a three-year period, beginning on August 1, 2011, for veterans who were enrolled in certain non-public institutions of higher learning before April 1, 2011. To qualify, the institution’s per-credit hour charges must exceed \$700 and its total tuition and fees must exceed \$17,500 per academic year.

Talking Points:

- ★ This bill aims to “grandfather” and fix the hastily passed legislation by Democrats in 2010 that changed the Post-9/11 GI Bill and therefore broke the promise made to student veterans seeking higher education at any institution of his/her choice.
- ★ VA estimates 30,000 student veterans including those in school in Arizona, Michigan, New Hampshire, New York, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Texas, would be adversely affected without action, and those students might potentially have to transfer, drop out of school, or find another way to pay for the increase as of August 1, 2011.

Cost: Paid for by extending the existing loan fee requirements associated with the VA Loan Guaranty program for one year, saving \$22 million in FY2012, \$3 million over five years, and \$3 million over 10 years. Existing loans would see a fee increase of \$3.31/month on a \$100,000 home loan, based on current interest rates.

To read more, please click [here](#).

H.R. 1657, introduced by Rep. Stutzman

Summary: Directs the Department of Veterans Affairs to take action to debar non-veteran owned firms who fraudulently misrepresent themselves as veteran-owned or service-disabled firms, and sets a mandatory five-year debarment period.

Talking Points:

- ★ GAO has already identified 10 firms that have misrepresented themselves to the Department of Veterans Affairs as veteran-owned.
- ★ There is no way to gauge how many firms have willfully misrepresented themselves to the Department of Veterans Affairs.
- ★ Ensures the Department of Veterans Affairs verifies and maintains due diligence in the contracting process on behalf of veteran-owned businesses.

Cost: None.

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